low sulphur HSD would also be supplied throughout the country by April, 1999.

(iii) CNG which is a clean burning and environment friendly fuel has been introduced in Delhi, Mumbai and Baroda. CNG is also available in Surat.

(iv) Studies conducted by the Indian Institute of Petroleum and IOC Ltd. (R&D) have shown that petrol blends containing 3% methanol or 5% ethanol can be used by petrol vehicles without modification of engine. Substitution of diesel upto 15-20% was also found to be feasible under dual fuel mode with slight modification of engine. But the use of alcohols on commercial scale could not be undertaken due to non-availability of ethanol on a sustained basis. The Ministry of Food, Department of Sugar has set up a Committee under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Food) to examine the possibility of mixing of ethanol produced by Sugar Manufacturing/Distillery units with petrol/diesel.

Declining trend in use of Railways for carrying freight

*50. SHRI MD. SALIM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the fact that Railways have gradually been losing out to the road transport sector over the years carrying only 40 percent of the total freight; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) The Government is aware that the demand for freight transport has outpaced the growth of the Railways' capacity to carry, resulting in the overflow going to the road sector.

(b) To prevent further overflow. Railways need to generate substantial additional transport capacity, warranting higher mobilisation of resources than it is able to generate at present. Railway is encouraging private sector participation in generation of additional transport capacity, through introduction of BOLT, BOO and OYWS schemes. To capture the non-bulk traffic, it has entered the inter-modal business.

Transfer of share of profits to ONGC and OIL

*51. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to transfer some share of profits by prospective Private Oilfields *viz* Reliance Industries, Videocon Ltd. and the Essar Ltd. to ONGC and OIL and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether CAG has raised serious objection on Government's decision to transfer some share of profit to ONGC and OIL; if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) how much percentage of this profit will go to the ONGC and OIL and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) No such decision has been taken by the Government.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Stress on Eco-friendly Aquaculture practices

*52. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Stress on eco-friendly aquaculture practices" which appeared in the 'News Time' dated the 6th June, 1997; and

(b) if so, the present position of prawn farming in view of Supreme Court's order?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Supreme Court in its judgement dated 11.12.1996 has ordered that no shrimp ponds can be constructed or set up within the Coastal Regulation . Zone (CRZ) as defined in the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, 1991 and that the shrimp culture ponds already set up in the Coastal Regulation Zone shall be demolished and removed before 31.3.1997. However, the Supreme Court's direction do not apply to the traditional and improved traditional types of technologies practised by the farming community in the coastal low lying areas. The Supreme Court also ordered that the Government shall constitute an authority under Section 3(3) of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and shall confer on the said authority all the powers necessary to protect the ecologically fragile coastal areas, sea-shore, water front and other coastal areas and specially to deal with the situation created by the shrimp culture industries in the coastal States/UTs. The Supreme Court has further directed that shrimp culture ponds outside Coastal Regulation Zone area may be set up with the prior approval of such an Authority.

A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking a review of their judgement. The matter is sub-judice.

Rajya Sabha has passed the Aquaculture Authority Bill, 1997 on the 20th March, 1997. The Bill seeks to, *inter - alia,* regulate the activities connected with aquaculture in the coastal areas. When the Bill was to be taken up in the Lok Sabha, the fact that the Supreme Court had stayed operation of its judgement became known and, therefore, the bill was not moved in the Lok Sabha. The Court has stayed the operation of its judgement till the 30th July, 1997. The date of hearing on the review petition in the Supreme Court is today, i.e. 25th July, 1997. Further action will be taken after the Supreme Court has passed orders.

Backlog of cooking gas connections in Andhra Pradesh

*53. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a backlog of some 10.95 lakh applications for cooking gas connections in the State of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the break-up of such pending applications from different parts of the State;

(c) the specific plan that has been drawn up to clear this huge backlog; and

(d) how does the position of Andhra Pradesh compare with that of other States in the country?

(THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) The number of persons in the waiting list registered with the PSU Oil Companies in the State of Andhra Pradesh as on 30.6.1997 was about 11.27 lakhs.

(b) The District-wise break-up of PSU Oil Companies is given in Statement-I *((See below)*

(c) New LPG connections are released in a Phased manner thoughout the Country including the State of Andhra Pradesh depending upon the LPG availability, waiting list, slack available with the Distributors and their viability. The increasing popularity of LPG as domestic cooking gas and subsidised price have led to a very high demand which has resulted in the creation of large waiting list for new LPG connections. This exceeds LPG availability from indigenous production of LPG and possible imports, and therefore, new enrolment plans are drawn up on the basis of LPG availability on a year to year basis.